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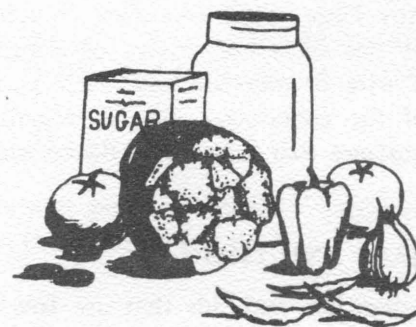
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BRINED PICKLES

*Frances L. Reasonover**

Brined pickles add crispness, firm texture and pungent flavor to meals and snacks. They contribute some nutritive value and contain little or no fat.

Brined or fermented pickles go through a curing process of about 3 weeks. Other vegetables such as tomatoes may also be brined in the same way as dilled cucumbers.



Curing changes cucumber color from bright green to an olive or yellow green. The white interior of fresh cucumber becomes uniformly translucent. A desirable flavor is developed during curing without being excessively sour, salty or spicy.

Cucumber dills may be flavored with garlic, if desired. The skin of the pickle is tender and firm, but not hard, rubbery or shriveled. The inside is tender and firm, not soft and mushy.

INGREDIENTS

Correct proportions of vegetables, salt, vinegar and spices are essential. Measure or weigh all ingredients carefully.

Select tender vegetables for pickling. Use unwaxed cucumbers for pickling whole. The brine cannot penetrate waxed cucumbers.

Sort for uniform size.

Use vegetables as soon as possible after gathering or purchasing from the market. If the vegetables cannot be used immediately, refrigerate them or spread them where they will be well ventilated and cool. Do not use vegetables that show any evidence of mold.

Use pure granulated salt, if available. Table salt with filler to prevent caking may make the brine cloudy. Iodized salt may darken pickles.

Use a high-grade cider or white distilled vinegar of 4 to 6 percent acidity.

Use soft water if possible. If hard water is used, boil and let stand for 24 hours. Remove scum.

EQUIPMENT

Use stainless steel, aluminum or glass utensils to heat pickling liquid.

For brining or fermenting, use a crock or stone jar or large glass jar bowl or casserole. Use a heavy plate or large glass lid, which fits inside the container, to cover vegetables in the brine. Use a weight to hold the cover down and keep vegetables below the surface of the brine. A glass jar filled with water makes a good weight.

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Any large metal container may be used for a waterbath canner if it is: deep enough to allow for one or two inches of water above the tops of jars and little space for boiling; has a tight-fitting lid; and has a wire or wooden rack with partitions to keep jars from touching each other and falling against the sides of the container. The waterbath heat treatment destroys organisms that cause spoilage and inactivates enzymes that may affect flavor, color and texture.

JARS AND LIDS

Select jars and lids that are free of cracks, chips, rust, dents or any defect that may prevent air-tight seals and cause needless spoilage.

Wash jars and lids in hot, soapy water. Rinse with hot water. Wash and rinse lids and bands. Seal lids according to manufacturer's directions.



Brined Dill Pickles

20 pounds (about $\frac{1}{2}$ bushel) cucumbers, 3 to 6 inches in length
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup whole mixed pickling spice
2 or 3 bunches dill plant, fresh or dried (optional)
 $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups vinegar
 $1\frac{3}{4}$ cups salt, pure granulated
 $2\frac{1}{2}$ gallons water

Brining

Cover cucumbers with cold water. Wash thoroughly, using a vegetable brush; handle gently to avoid bruising. Take care to remove blossoms. Drain on rack or wipe dry.

Place half the pickle spices and a layer of dill in a 5-gallon crock or jar. Fill the crock with cucumbers within 3 or 4 inches from the top. Place a layer of dill and remaining spices over the top of cucumbers. (Garlic may be added, if desired.) Thoroughly mix the vinegar, salt and water and pour over the cucumbers. Cover with a heavy china or glass plate or lid that fits inside the crock.

Use a weight to hold the plate down and keep the cucumbers under the brine. A glass jar filled with water makes a good weight. Cover loosely with clean cloth. Keep pickles at room temperature and remove scum daily when formed. Scum may start forming in 3 to 5 days. Do not stir pickles, but be sure they are covered completely with brine. If necessary, make additional brine, using original proportions specified in recipe.

In about 3 weeks the cucumbers will have become an olive-green color and should have a desirable flavor. Any white spots inside the fermented cucumbers will disappear in processing.

Freshening

The original brine is usually cloudy as a result of yeast development during the fermentation period. If this cloudiness is objectionable, fresh brine may be used to cover the pickles when packing them into the jars.



When making fresh brine, use $\frac{1}{2}$ cup salt and 4 cups vinegar to 1 gallon of water. The fermentation brine generally is preferred for its added flavor and should be strained before heating to boiling.

Packing

Pack the pickles, along with some of the dill, into clean, hot quart jars; add garlic, if desired. Avoid too tight a pack. Cover with boiling brine to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the top of the jar. Adjust jar lids.

Processing

Process in boiling water for 15 minutes. Start to count the processing time as soon as hot jars are placed into the actively boiling water.

Remove jars and set upright, several inches apart, on a wire rack to cool. The recipe yields about 9 to 10 quarts of pickles.

PICKLING OTHER VEGETABLES

Vegetables ordinarily used for brining are green tomatoes, green beans, green and red peppers, onions and cauliflower. Follow the same instructions for making Brined Dill Pickles, except use the following freshening process and recipes.

Freshening Brined Vegetables

Freshen the pickles to remove the surplus salt and at the same time make the pickle plump and attractive. Soak in an equal part of vinegar and water until sufficient salt is removed. The brined vegetables should taste fairly salty, for the salt helps to preserve as well as give flavor.

For crisper, clearer pickles, place freshened vegetables into jars and cover with a good clear vinegar of 5 percent acetic acid; close tightly and let stand for 1 week. Large-sized vegetables should stand 2 weeks. Pour off this vinegar and make vegetables into any desired kind of pickle.

Green Tomato Dill Pickles

Green tomatoes, if freshly picked, can be used for making dill tomato pickles. Select uniform size tomatoes in excellent condition. The amount of brine planned for 20 pounds of dill cucumbers will be sufficient for the same amount of dill tomatoes.

Mustard Pickles

1 quart cucumbers	2 cups onions
2 cups string beans	2 cups cauliflower
2 cups green peppers	1 cup sweet red peppers

Mustard Mixture

6 cups vinegar	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup flour
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups sugar	2 teaspoons turmeric powder
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup ground mustard	

Freshen the brined vegetables and cut attractively for serving and drain.

Mix the dry ingredients and add sufficient cold vinegar to make a smooth paste. Add the remaining vinegar and cook quickly until mixture is thickened. Pour while hot over the freshened vegetables. Mix well, pack into hot jars and seal.

Okra Dill Pickles

Freshly picked okra can be used in making dill pickles. Select uniform size okra with a small amount of stem.

The amount of brine planned for 20 pounds of dill cucumbers will be sufficient for the dilled okra.

Onion Pickles

1 gallon small white onions	3 cups granulated sugar
5 cups white vinegar	2 tablespoons mixed pickling spices

Freshen onions. Mix the sugar and vinegar and drop in spices tied in a bag. Bring to a boil. Cover and let cool. Heat and cool several times for best flavor. Pack freshened onions into hot jars and cover with spiced vinegar and seal.

Note: More or less sugar may be added according to taste.

Spiced Pickles

3 cups vinegar	1 tablespoon mustard seed
1 cup water	2 hot red peppers (if desired)
1½ cups sugar	1 or 2 tablespoons mixed spices

Freshen vegetables. Mix ingredients and bring to boiling point. (More sugar may be added as desired.) Pack vegetables in hot jars. Pour hot vinegar over the freshened vegetables and seal.

Sweet Mixed Pickles

1 quart cucumbers	1 pint cut cauliflower
1 pint sliced onions	1 pint sliced green tomatoes
1 pint cut snap beans	1 pint sliced green sweet peppers
½ pint sliced sweet red pepper	

Freshen vegetables. Cut attractively for serving and drain. Pack into hot jars and cover with a spiced vinegar made as follows:

4 cups vinegar	1 tablespoon mustard seed
3½ cups sugar	2 hot red peppers
1 tablespoon celery seed	1 tablespoon mixed pickle spices

Tie spices in a bag. Mix sugar and vinegar together and drop in spice bag. Bring to a boil, cover and set aside to cool. If the mixture is allowed to come to a boil and cool two or three times, more flavor will be extracted from the spice bag. Remove the spice bag and pour liquid over vegetables which have been packed into hot jars and seal.

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